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Message from the Mayor

The revitalization we've all been waiting for East of the River is finally taking shape—and it's the result of many of us across the District working in partnership.

I had the honor to break ground recently on a brand-new Giant Food Store and retail complex at Congress Heights in Ward 8. I'm happy to report that Giant is so committed to the neighborhood that the store in Congress Heights will be the company's largest, most state-of-the-art supermarket in the District of Columbia. It will serve as the centerpiece of a retail center known as Shops at Park Village. The development will also include 75 single family homes, 16 of which will guaranteed affordable for moderate-income families.

While the arrival of a major supermarket to a neighborhood may seem like everyday news, it's incredibly important and long overdue for residents of Ward 8. All families want the opportunity of easy access to affordable, healthy food. Many District residents have the luxury of living near a grocery store in their own neighborhoods. But in Ward 8, there's not a grocery store in sight, and it shouldn't be that way. Very soon, it won't be that way.

The Shops at Park Village will also provide more amenities for Ward 8 residents. But this new development is about so much more than shopping. It's also about growing the economy of Ward 8. It's about jobs for residents. It's about bringing people into the District to shop. It's about providing ownership opportunities for first-time home buyers. It's about cooperation and partnership among the federal government, District government, DC Council, developers, and community members. And it's about keeping our sales tax dollars in the District, which can be used to fund services for people in our city who need them most.

This new retail and housing area is just the tip of the iceberg for what we have accomplished in Ward 8. There's a new cultural arts center on Mississippi Avenue—"The Arc"—with dance classes ranging from ballet to hip-hop and a full-service family wellness center, encouraging exercise, learning and good health.

Operation HOPE recently opened in the area—it's a national nonprofit which strives to bring economic self-sufficiency and a spirit of revitalization to communities. Affordable housing has been made available at Henson Ridge. And now, the Giant Food Store and Shops at Park Village join these accomplishments.

Before I took office as Mayor nearly eight years ago, several areas of the District were in disrepair and without a sense of community and hope. We have rehabilitated many, and Ward 8 is next. As I said before, things are looking up for Ward 8.

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AGENCY WEBSITES

Department of Human Services

Office of Tax and Revenue

Department of Parks and Recreation

Department of Employment Services

Metropolitan Police Department

Office of Boards and Commissions

Commission on the Arts and Humanities

LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and Tourism

DC Public Library

DC Public Service Commission Minimizes Impact of Electric Generation Price Increases on Residential Bills

Across the country, consumers are facing higher electricity bills due to increasing prices for fuel used to generate electricity, worsened by the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. But due to the way the District of Columbia Public Service Commission (DCPSC) has mandated the process, Pepco's residential consumers in DC have been spared the dramatic price increases experienced in Maryland and other parts of the country.

The DCPSC has established rules that require Pepco to solicit bids from different electric generation suppliers through staggered contracts. This "portfolio management" approach protects consumers by dampening the effects of price swings in volatile energy markets. The first round of bidding occurred in the fall of 2004. While prices for that load remain locked into long-run contracts, the second round of bidding was completed in February 2006. As a result of the solicitations, seven suppliers won the right to supply power to Pepco, which anticipates that residents in the District will see an average annual increase of 12 percent in their bills, or about \$8 per month. The increase, if approved by the DCPSC, will take effect on June 1, 2006.

"While Pepco's filing unfortunately represents a potential increase in electricity bills, by directing Pepco to enter into longer term contracts, we have helped reduce consumers' exposure to volatile market conditions," said DCPSC Chairperson Agnes A. Yates.

Meanwhile, in states where a larger share of electricity was up for bid this year, the increase to consumers' bills is much larger. For example, household electric bills in Maryland's Anne Arundel and Howard counties are expected to rise by more than 70 percent. Residents of Montgomery and Prince George's counties served by Pepco will see their typical bill rise by about 39 percent. In Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut and New York, customer bills for some utilities are expected to go up by 28, 27, 23, and 30 percent, respectively. The distribution portion of the bill for all District customers will remain capped until at least August 2007. For further information, visit dcpsc.org.

Honoring 19 High-Performing Charter Schools

On March 8, I was pleased to honor 19 high-performing public charter schools across the District of Columbia. These schools are models of success, and I'm hoping we can build upon their achievements. Last year, the District was awarded funds to reward the work of charter schools. The 19 schools receiving the High Performing School Incentive Awards (HPSIA) have demonstrated proficiency on the Stanford 9 achievement test, a statewide assessment tool.

Tackling the problems which face our public education system is not an easy task. That's why I have been an ardent supporter of charter schools. Public charter schools are offering hope to hundreds of children in our city and providing an innovative option for concerned parents at all economic levels. These 19 schools highlight the success of this initiative.

Charter schools are allowed to hire their own staff and use instructional methods that work best for the curriculum they choose to teach. Smaller class sizes benefit the learning environment while parents have the flexibility to choose an educational model which is best for their child's future. Additionally, charter schools participate in standardized testing and are required to meet DC Public Schools standards. It's a win-win for parents and children.

For example, take a look at Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS, one of the 19 high-performing charter schools. Elsie Whitlow teaches students both English and Spanish in the classroom, and they are also deeply committed to providing a well-rounded education in reading, math, social studies, science, and the arts. Most importantly, they are committed and devoted to parental involvement, a crucial element needed for a child's success. Elsie Whitlow, and all the District's public charter schools, stress the importance of **choice** in education. Parents of all socioeconomic classes should be allowed to give their children the best opportunities possible. Public charter schools make this dream a reality.

We've made great strides in recent years in providing educational choices for parents. It's our duty to continue this effort so we provide accountable, functional, and quality schools for the future leaders of our city.

A Victory on the Way to Work Act

Last week, I praised the DC Council's passage of the Way to Work Amendment Act, which I'm confident will mean better results for our residents seeking jobs. I initially introduced the bill last year as part of my budget submission last year. It was designed to address several employment barriers facing District residents. The legislation provides a living wage of \$11.75 per hour for District residents who work for local employers who receive economic development assistance and funding from the District. The bill also enacts stronger First Source hiring requirements and establishes a Job Opportunity Bank to provide job training to District residents.

We worked hard over the past year with the business and labor communities, nonprofits, and government agencies to refine and improve the Way to Work Amendment Act. The bottom line is that this act will help the District's chronically unemployed residents get jobs, and keep them. I created a task force charged with providing recommendations for revising the original legislation to reflect the concerns of all interested parties. Following the task force meetings, I revised the Way to Work Amendment Act—which received the endorsement of both the labor and business communities—and forwarded this version to the DC Council.

If you work hard everyday, you shouldn't have to raise your family in poverty. Now, we will also have a Job Opportunity Bank to provide job training to residents, and stricter enforcement of the requirement for District contractors to hire District residents first. While our city's unemployment rate has been declining in the past year, too many of our residents face an uphill battle when it comes to finding jobs. I'm happy to say that this bill will change that.



BRC Alerts

DCLMPC Partnership
Works!

DCOA Spotlight on Aging

DHS Outreach

DISB DC Financial
Gateway Express

OAG Inter Alia...

OAPIA Updates

OPGD Grant Funding
Alerts

South Capitol Street Bridge Design

It was an exciting day last week when I unveiled plans for a new South Capitol Street-Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge. Six years ago on the banks of the Anacostia River, representatives from 18 federal and District agencies joined me to sign the document creating the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative. The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative will serve as the guide for the revitalization of our city's most undervalued natural resource, the Anacostia River.

The South Capitol Street corridor is critical to reconnecting our city to the Anacostia River, and it is an important gateway to our city—one that many people will use as they travel to and from our new baseball stadium in Southeast. It leads to the downtown heart of our city and to the heart of our nation's democratic institutions—the Capitol, Supreme Court, Library of Congress and other buildings. Today, the South Capitol Street-Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge is badly deteriorated and needs to be replaced. Now we have a tremendous opportunity to build a new river-crossing that brings together neighborhoods on both sides of the river. We need to make South Capitol Street one of our city's great avenues, rivaling Pennsylvania Avenue as a great symbolic destination.

Last week I unveiled four conceptual designs for a new South Capitol Street-Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge. At the unveiling, I was joined by Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton; our Department of Transportation (DDOT) Director Michelle Pourciau, and John Deatrick, Deputy Director, DDOT.

DDOT has produced these designs to stimulate public discussion on what a new bridge might look like—so that we have a fittingly distinctive new structure for the Anacostia and for the South Capitol Gateway. This is a major project for the District, which will take several years to design and build. However, it isn't too soon to start the discussion. The cost of the new bridge is expected to be \$250 million, with 80 percent federal dollars and 20 percent local money.

The Environmental Impact Study will be released in June. We expect construction to begin in 2011. There will be a community information meeting in early April and more formal public hearings starting in June. Again, these concepts are preliminary—the final design could look like one of these or be some variation on these designs. We would not have reached this important milestone without the support of key members of Congress, including Congresswoman Norton and Congressmen Steny Hoyer and Joe Knollenberg, and I want to thank them for their support. With this congressional support and that of our federal partners, we will make this vision for South Capitol Street a reality. For more information, visit ddot.dc.gov.

Ms. Senior DC Pageant on the Horizon

This is a reminder to readers that the Ms. Senior DC Pageant is on the horizon—and we're looking for contenders! District women 60 years of age and older are invited to compete in the Ms. Senior District of Columbia Pageant set for June 25, 2006. The Ms. Senior DC Pageant celebrates the elegant, talented, and community service-oriented women in the District of Columbia. Pageant contestants will compete in four categories judged by an impartial panel from the community. The contestants will have a personal interview with the judges, recite their philosophy of life, and compete in talent and evening gown segments during the pageant. The winner will represent the District of Columbia in the Ms. Senior America Pageant. Ms. Senior DC, Sandra Bears, placed in the top 10 in the national contest held in Las Vegas last year.

For applications, call (202) 289-1510, ext. 170, or (202) 724-5622. Anyone interested can also pick up applications from senior program sites in the District. The deadline for applications is April 30, 2006. The Ms. Senior DC Pageant is presented by the DC Senior America Cameo Club, Family and Child Services of Washington, DC, Inc. and the DC Office on Aging. For more information, visit dcoa.dc.gov.

DC Public Service Commission Approves Construction of Transmission Lines to Ensure Electric Reliability

In a March 6, 2006 decision, the District of Columbia Public Service Commission (DCPSC) approved Pepco's emergency application to build electric transmission lines that will bring power into the District. The new construction is intended to address uncertainty surrounding the future status of the Mirant Corporation's Potomac River power plant in Alexandria that was shut down in August 2005.

The Potomac River plant, which normally supplies 482 MW of electricity to the District, was abruptly shut down by Mirant on August 24, 2005, in response to air quality concerns raised by Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality. Because the plant is essential to the District's electric reliability, the DCPSC petitioned the US Department of Energy to reverse the action.

While the federal government ordered the Potomac River plant to be at least in a state of readiness, there is no guarantee that the Mirant plant will continue to operate indefinitely. Pepco has previously testified that, absent power from the Potomac River plant, if the two 230 kV transmission circuits into the District were to fail, there would be blackouts in much of the city, and, after 24 hours without power, the Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant would be forced to release untreated sewage into the Potomac River.

The purpose of the new construction is to restore the District's electric reliability by providing a backup power supply. Specifically, Pepco plans to construct two overhead 69 kV transmission lines and two 230 kV underground transmission lines, allowing increased imports of power into the city.

Before issuing its ruling (Order No. 13895), the DCPSC followed a rigorous procedural schedule which included the filing of testimony by the Office of the People's Counsel (OPC) and Pepco, consideration of the final route drawings of the transmission lines and an Environmental Impact Statement, solicitation of public input, and the convening of both an evidentiary hearing and a community hearing in the section of Ward 8 where overhead lines are planned. No party opposed the filing. For further information, visit dcpsc.org.



District Activities



Mayor Williams and city officials unveil designs for the 41,000-seat baseball stadium, a modern glass, steel and concrete structure that will offer views of the Capitol dome and the Anacostia River.



Mayor Anthony Williams and Mayor Myung-Bak Lee of Seoul, Republic of Korea, sign a Sister City agreement between the two cities. Students from Barnard Elementary School, adopted by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, also attended the ceremony.



Mayor Williams, along with Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Kathy Patterson, Chairman of the DC Council Committee on Education, Libraries and Recreation, presented awards to 19 high-performing charter schools in the District of Columbia.

Community News

- [Good Wishes to District Teams Competing in NCAA Basketball Tournaments](#)
- [Designs for Nationals Ballpark Unveiled; Features Innovative Architecture, Amenities](#)
- [Mayor Announces Changes in District's Procurement Procedures](#)

Upcoming Events

[View All News Releases](#)

3/18	DC Superior Court Community Courts Forum 9 am–12 pm Kelly Miller Middle School Auditorium 301 49th Street, NE For further information, call (202) 879-4893
3/25	National Marathon 6 am–1 pm Begin and end at RFK Parking Lot 7 For further information, including the race route, road closures and a spectator's guide, visit nationalmarathon.com
3/28	Town Hall Meeting: <i>Preventing Underage Alcohol Use</i> 10 am–12 pm Sumner School & Archives Museum 1201 17th Street, NW
3/31	Job Recruitment Fair 10 am–1 pm Naylor Road One-Stop Career Center 2626 Naylor Road, SE

